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SUBJECT: GABON/CAR: PRESIDENT BOZIZE IN LIBREVILLE FOR TALKS
REF: BANGUI 0213

¶1. (SBU) Central African Republic President Francois Bozize flew to Libreville December 2 for talks with his Gabonese counterpart El Hadj Omar Bongo Ondimba on the eve of a long-awaited "inclusive national dialogue" among CAR political and military factions. The dialogue is scheduled to begin December 5 in Bangui, with Bongo and newly-designated mediator Pierre Buyoya presiding. Buyoya is a former president of Burundi. Bongo, who has been deeply involved in the CAR peace process since its inception, acts as a kind of ultimate referee for disputes arising under the June 2008 Libreville Agreement, which paved the way for a ceasefire and political dialogue in CAR's long-simmering crisis. Bongo also acts with the loose authority of other central African heads of state, as chair of an ad hoc committee on CAR established under the Economic and Monetary Community of Central AFRICA (CEMAC).

¶2. (SBU) We have only a sketchy readout of the latest Libreville meeting. The final communique, and Gabon's official media, confirm that:

- ** Buyoya has been selected as mediator.
- ** Bongo will attend the opening ceremony of the inclusive national dialogue in Bangui on December 8.
- ** Former CAR president Anger-Felix Patasse would be arriving in Bangui on December 7.

We will provide other details as they become available.

¶3. (U) Following following is a rough English translation of the communique. The original French text will also be provided to AF/C.

(Begin Text)

Final Communique on the occasion of the friendly working visit by H.E. Francois Bozize Yangouvonda, President of the Central African Republic

At the invitation of his Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA, President of the Republic of Gabon, His Excellency Francois BOZIZE YANGOUVONDA, President of the Central African Republic, made a friendly working visit to the Republic of Gabon on December 2, 2008.

The Gabonese Head of State was assisted by:

- "QMr. Didjob Divungi DI NDINGE, Vice President of the Republic;
- "QMr. Nelson Noel MESSONE, Delegate Minister to the Minister of State, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Regional Integration;

"QMr. Guy ROSSATANGA-RIGNAULT, Personal High Representative of the President of the Republic.

The Central African Head of State was accompanied by:

"QMr. Cyriaque NGONDA, Minister of Communication

"QMr. Paul Raymond NDOUGOU, Minister for the Interior,

"QMr. Stanislas MBANGOT Minister and Advisor at the Presidency.

This visit of the President of the Central African Republic came in the context of permanent consultations between His Excellency Mr. Francois BOZIZE YANGOUVONDA and His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA, in his capacity as President of the CEMAC Ad Hoc Committee on Central African issues.

In the course of their meeting, the two Heads of State had head-to-head consultations in the course of which they carried out a broad exchange on the political situation in the Central African Republic and other subjects of common interest.

In this respect, H.E. Mr. Francois BOZIZE YANGOUVONDA informed the Gabonese Head of State of the political evolution in the Central African Republic since the signature, on June 21 2008 in Libreville, of the Global Peace Accord between the Central African government and Central African politico-military movements, as well as the three meetings held in Libreville by the Follow-Up

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Committee of this accord.

On the eve of the opening of the upcoming inclusive Political Dialogue bringing together the ensemble of Central African political actors, from the 5th to the 20th of December 2008 in Bangui, His Excellency Mr. Francois BOZIZE YANGOUVONDA also brought to the attention of His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA that Mr. Pierre BUYOYA had been chosen to lead these important meetings. Concerning the opening of the Inclusive Political Dialogue, the preliminary phases will begin on Friday December 5, 2008, before the official opening on Monday December 8, under the patronage of His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA, President of the Republic of Gabon, Chairman of CEMAC Ad Hoc Committee on Central African issues .

The President of the Central African Republic again thanked the Gabonese Head of State for his unstinting efforts to bring peace and dialogue to this brotherly country. The Gabonese Head of State, for his part, congratulated his Central African counterpart for this work, which begins in a peaceful climate, an indispensable condition for the development of the Central African Republic, and for the stability of the sub-region.

He again reiterated his firm commitment to see the triumph of the principles of peace and of dialogue in the entire country and invited all the Central African actors to work in good faith and without reservation for the success of the process of emerging from crisis.

At the end of his visit, His Excellency Mr. Francois BOZIZE YANGOUVONDA, as well as the delegation that accompanied him, thanked the Gabonese government and people for the welcome that they received and they expressed their sincere gratitude to His Excellency El Hadj Omar BONGO ONDIMBA, President of the Republic, Head of State, for his constant support for the peace process in the Central African Republic.

(End Text)

